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MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Committee Meeting, November 29, 1962

SUBJECT: Information and Public Affairs Matters Growing Out of Cuban Situation

I. IL-28s

The question of offensive weapons still in Cuba goes beyond the IL-28s, so far as the public is concerned. It is closely related to persistent public doubts about what else may still remain in Cuba, a set of doubts that is still being confused and nourished by continuing speculation and rumors -- and some flat "reports" -- emanating from Cuba to the effect that Soviet offensive missiles remain on the island.

This subject breaks down into the following segments:

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They are being crated, and presumably the removal is underway or about to be underway. Several days have passed since any information on this has been released. It would seem to be time to let it be known that the bombers are being prepared for removal.

2. Inspection of IL-28s removal

In line with Ambassador Thompson's suggestion, presumably there will be only courtesy acceptance of the Soviet offer to allow for the IL-28s the same along-side inspection arranged for the missile removal. It would be useful from the public affairs standpoint to make at least some gesture of inspection, perhaps helicopter pictures. The pictures should be released for publication.

3. What Soviet weapons remain in Cuba?

This question is not fading away. As of now the only answer we are authorized and able to give is, "We are not aware of any other offensive weapons remaining in Cuba." There are still many daily inquiries from the press seeking more precise distinction between the MMBM and IRBM that were sent into Cuba; how many of each. The continuing rumors of missiles hidden in caves, of secret emplacements, of heavy

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Soviet troop detachments persist daily, e.g., a CBS newsmen broadcast from Havana Saturday night the flat claim that "At least 88 medium and long-range missiles were unloaded (at Marielle and Bayia Onda) from Russian ship., 36 in the month of September and 52 in October ... stories tell of big concrete constructions in the wooded countryside and under ground rocket bases still being built by the Russians in the mountains. It is known that Russian military camps have not been removed and although 3,000 Soviet technicians have left since the crisis the size and strength of Russian military forces still left in Cuba is a question of speculation. Conservative estimates put the number somewhere between 25,000 and 35,000."

Quite aside from the accuracy of such reports they keep alive a set of doubts as to the true satisfactoriness of the withdrawal as we have been able to observe and report it thus far. It is possible to continue to live with such stories if at the same time there is full public knowledge that deliberate and persistent air reconnaissance is continuing and that this reconnaissance is satisfying military and intelligence officials that nothing of any serious nature remains behind in Cuba. This continued public emphasis on reconnaissance, however, raises a question, discussed below, of how the matter of continued reconnaissance is handled in the context of our negotiations with the Russians.

4. SAM Sites

There will be continued inquiries about the SAM sites. If they were installed as an adjunct of the offensive installation and evidence develops of their dismantling or possible dismantling, public evidence of this would be most useful.

5. Verification

This relates not only to II-38s and speculation about other offensive weapons, but also to the matter of negotiating posture discussed below. The tenor of press inquiries is that we seem to be moving away from any real desire for verification; that in fact we would be more satisfied with our own unilateral reconnaissance.

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A deliberate decision to let the verification issue wither away will probably create no untoward response from the public if it is linked with demonstrable continuance of aerial reconnaissance. It is possible that to make this truly demonstrable there would be a need occasionally to publish photo evidence that the reconnaissance is continuing and effective.

If, indeed, the policy is not to obtain or push for verification in Cuba, then more must be done than is now being done to make clear that we are still seeking it. On this point it is very difficult to play down in our public position both continued reconnaissance and the pressure for verification.

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Part II

Our Negotiating Position

This subject is best divided into three sections that might usefully be labelled the "Florida business", the U.S.-USSR aspect, and the Castro question.

1. The Florida business.

The Florida business included questions about the possibility of some sort of inspection procedure that would include United States installations in South Eastern United States. Is this a live possibility? If so, are there distinctions between inspection of official United States' military installations and such unofficial fixtures as Alpha 66-type refugee formations? Are we going to crack down on anti-Castro refugees? Are we pressing OAS allies to take measures about refugee activities from their countries?

If it is not a live question, the whole question of long-term inspection of security assurances is soon going to require some more precise public treatment.

2. The Castro question.

Thus far a fairly clear line is being drawn between the immediate matter of closing off the US-USSR confrontation and the longer term question of U.S. and OAS policy towards Castro. It is only natural that this has been fogged over in the early aftermath of the quarantine showdown, but the questions in the public mind about our future determination concerning a) Castro, and b) the continued existence of a foothold for Communism in the hemisphere are growing stronger and sharper as the crisis fades. This, again, is related to our future position on verification as well as our activities within the OAS to determine a clear and unified attack on the problem of post missiles Castro, small things, such as the decision of commercial airlines to resume flights to Cuba and can help create an impression that the pressure on Castro is easing. There are several ways of thermostatically controlling this impression. For example,

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revival of the shipping orders would in itself have the effect of countering any notion that Castro is coming out of the crisis with a semblance of protection he did not have before.

3. The East-West aspects.

This is best addressed by a question: what kind of post-Cuba atmosphere do we want?

The Soviet theme has become extremely clear, and is best characterized by Kossygin's anniversary speech on November 6, which said:

"Who gave into whom in this situation? We consider that it was a concession on both sides, a concession to reason and peace... On the basis of compromise and mutual concessions, the acuteness of the conflict has been eliminated and talks are being conducted with an aim to eliminating it completely. ...We consider that concessions had to be made by both sides, because they were wise concessions and a wise compromise... The Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence means that the two antagonistic capitalist systems, have conceded that they can live without war, in other words exist. This, indeed, is a compromise and a mutual concession. It presupposes that disputed issues are solved not by means of war, but by means of negotiation based on the principle of peaceful coexistence, peaceful competition."

One weeks excerpts from various Soviet comments and statements shows that the "mutual concessions theme" is being played to the hilt by the Russians, with emphasis on the possibilities of a "package" settlement of a number of basic questions, principally nuclear test ban, disarmament, atom free zones, Berlin and Germany.

This in itself implies an after-the-fact linkage between Cuba and other East-West questions, and very often takes the line that since the USSR has made concessions in Cuba it is only right and proper that the West now give some ground elsewhere. X

The air of détente is being reflected in much American coverage in the press and on TV and is even reflected if but mildly, in the contrast between Mikoyan's presence in New York this week and his last trip to the United States on

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an earlier occasion when Mikoyan was noisily picketed and President Eisenhower felt it necessary to explain that sometimes a man has to sit down and talk with his enemies.

Obviously this whole matter is deeply tied in basic policy considerations, in the results of Mikoyan's talks in Washington and the central question of how the United States hopes to shape the aftermath of Cuba. The point to be made about the public affairs aspect is that the machinery at hand, namely, background briefings, public statements and speeches is adequate to affect the atmosphere in the way we want it affected. For example, in a week of discreet background talks with correspondents, Ambassador Thompson or other officials of the Government could affect with a great deal of precision the atmospheres of the East-West negotiating position in the weeks and months to come.

As mentioned above the public position on verification and air reconnaissance has a bearing on negotiations with the Russians. Conversations with Kuznetsov show that our insistence on the reconnaissance phrase in our proposed Cuba declaration is something of a raw nerve to Moscow. Presumably therefore a choice has to be made. If, in order to solve the public problems relating to the doubts about weapons remaining in Cuba it is felt necessary to continue to press publically these points, it would be at the expense of periodically rubbing this raw nerve. If on the other hand it is considered unwise to press these points in public because of the effect on negotiations with the Russians, then the unfinished doubts about the military and political situation in Cuba remain untended.

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PART III

Post-mortem, October 15-28

It might be useful here simply to list questions or lines of inquiry that are being pursued by the press and presumably reflect the interests of the public at large.

1. It is not possible to confine post-mortem to the period beginning October 15. There still is a considerable reluctance of the public to accept that October 15 was in fact the first day that we were able to know that the Russians had put offensive weapons in Cuba. There is still much talk and questioning about the so-called "intelligence gap". If and when it is possible to make public a documented explanation of intelligence accumulation and assessment, it would be most useful.

2. Reporters, e.g., Charles Bartlett and Stu Alsop, are still trying to assemble box scores on who was for what positions and what were the alternatives discussed between October 15 and October 22. Thus far this aspect of the story has not been discussed publically and it seems neither necessary nor advisable to change the present policy of keeping that book closed.

3. The application of Cuba to other problems. The point has been well made that the Cuban matter does not necessarily have application to any other international problem. This is true enough to remain a sensible line to follow. There still is considerable tendency to assume Cuba will lead to developments in other matters, but this is a natural outgrowth of the situation and should in time take care of itself.

4. Communications between the U.S. and Soviet Union. There is great curiosity about this, not simply the contents of the still unpublished communications, but a broader question that has been provoked by the public understanding of how close this took us toward possible conflict. Are the communications good enough, clear enough and fast enough? This is an understandable and a healthy curiosity and some thought might well be given to what, on the basis of the Cuban experience, the answers are.

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